ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
21 Bateman Street
Cambridge CB2 1NB
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
USA

Date of publication of master: 1977

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is identified by a three part serial number. The first part of the serial number designates the sales list in which the title was first announced. The second part indicates the agent of publication, i.e. the museum, gallery or organisation that was responsible for the publication of the catalogue. The third part of the serial number is the number allotted to that title.

Copyright: Filmed by permission of the copyright holders. The microfiche edition is the copyright of Chadwyck-Healey Ltd.

Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, Cambridge, England

General

michael lekakis

on the cover: diskos a, copper, 9½"

dAi

bulletin

special exhibition issue

2

vol. 26, jan. 1968

sculpture and drawings by

michael lekakis

dayton art institute, dayton, ohio

january 12 to february 18

1968

one-man exhibitions:

Artist's Gallery, New York, 1941.
Witte Memorial Museum, San Antonio, Texas, 1946.
Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York, 1946, 1948.
Watkins Gallery, American University, Washington, D.C., 1949.
Sigma Gallery, East Hampton, New York, 1959.
Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1961.

group exhibitions:

Whitney Museum Annuals of American Sculpture, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1958, 1960, 1962.

Sculptures and Drawing from Seven Sculptors. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1958.

Americans 1963. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1963. Circulated 1963-64.

Cleveland Museum of Art, 1961.

Boston Arts Festival, 1961.

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, *Continuity and Change*, 1962.

Dayton Art Institute, *International Selection, 1960-61*, Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio.

Dayton Art Institute, *Some Friends Revisited, 1966-67.*

museum collections:

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Dance* (choros), 1954-58. Sassafras, 30" high.

Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Ptisis*, 1957-62 oak, 35" high.

Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio, *Chorosphere*, 1947-58, cherry, 41" high.

Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio, *Untitled*, c. 1948. ink drawing, 22" x 15¼".

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, *Head of a Man*, ink on paper, 22 x 15".

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Sympan*, 1960. oak, 38" high.

Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, *Goddess of Growth*, ivory, 16¾" high.

Tel-Aviv Museum, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

introduction

It is twenty-seven years since the first one-man exhibition of the sculpture of Michael Lekakis was held in New York. Since that time, working in the same 28th Street studio which he occupied in 1941, he has produced a large and splendid body of sculpture, chiefly in wood. He has faced the common difficulties of the sculptor working in the '40's and '50's: a relatively meager market and problems in having the work exhibited because of its bulk and fragility. Although the '60's is seeing a remarkable burgeoning of interest in sculpture, Lekakis' work is only recently becoming recognized nationally.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1963 "discovered" Lekakis and exhibited his work in "Americans 1963". Harold Rosenberg, well known critic of action painting, at that time lamented the general demise of expressionism but felt that Lekakis' work was part of a "vigorous surge of Abstract Expressionism . . . occuring in sculpture."[1] Today Mr. Rosenberg would probably agree that his "surge" was something of a mirage and that center stage in the last five years has belonged to the object-makers, the minimalists, and the proponents of light, movement, sound and color.

Perhaps it is just for this reason that we feel we have arrived at the appropriate juncture for focusing attention on an artist who has preserved the main considerations of traditional sculpture while maintaining abstractness as central. The cool ideologies of the current scene form a strikingly contrasting background for a sculptor devoted to the preservation of intuition and to the search for forms which will serve as expressive equivalents to what he refers to as "universals of cosmic order."

The exhibition selects for emphasis three aspects of Lekakis' work — what I like to call the "columns," the "lines," and (for me the most important category) the "spheroids." These three themes have dominated his work in the last twenty-five years and seem to satisfy three distinct expressive demands. The columns are the most austere, their single upward thrust primordial and direct. The lines, on the other hand, disperse their energies with more freedom through movements that are at once rhythmic and structural. The spheroids grow in tight clusters or open out into constellations that seem ready to burst with unseen interior energies.

The ideas for these sculptures germinated in the late '40's and early '50's and have been in a painstaking process of realization and perfection ever since. When we look at *Scarabeus* of 1949 (catalog no. 30) and compare it to *Eros-Psyche A* (catalog no. 28), completed in 1967, we see the main impetus of Lekakis' development. He has moved from uniformity to multiplicity, continuously searching for and uncovering, as it were, the inner complexities of form. The search has produced no easy surface unity; Lekakis has not, for example, taken refuge in the discipline of pure geometry. He has worked out more difficult solutions, relying on intuition as well as rationality to achieve a satisfying and resonant unity. One has the impression that Lekakis has fully acknowledged the existence of the accidental and the incidental, the apparent vagaries of form, and that he has wrested from them a hard-won order.

Lekakis' material is wood. This is partly an accident of his upbringing, partly a matter of economic necessity. As a boy of Greek parentage growing up in New York, he gathered greens in the country with his florist father. He would then work with this material making wreaths and garlands. Later, wood became the most readily available material for a sculptor unable to afford casting and disinclined to welding. It has remained his medium. He has worked with it not in a spirit of subservience to the "nature of the material" but, in his best works, as its master, forcing it to serve the nature of his formal ideas. Nevertheless

he has commented on his medium as being "something between wet and dry. . . . It has not passed through fire and is therefore not 'dead' as are bronze and stone."

Discovering early a bent for the arts, Lekakis found encouragement from his brother-in-law, the painter George Constant. While remaining close to the culture of his parents and living all of his life in their Greek-American community in New York, he also has been a part of the avant-garde art community from the late 30's onward. A stubbornly independent nature has led him to approach that milieu with selectivity and skepticism. Poets, philosophers, musicians, and dancers have been his companions more often than artists. His intellectual fare has been a heady amalgam of Western and Oriental philosophy, Greek folkways and literature, Hindu music and religion, and friendships with such varied thinkers as Ezra Pound and Buckminster Fuller. A brief period of working from the model at the Art Students League comprised the whole of his "formal" education. Travel in Mexico and Europe (especially Greece), as well as intensively through the museums of New York, have brought him in intimate contact with world art. He has never taught, never married, and his contacts with the art market and the museum establishment have been limited and singularly unproductive. Lekakis epitomizes a vanishing type, the artist exclusively and religiously devoted to the cultivation of his art. Typically too, he is sensitive about his artistic reputation, but hardly given to managing a successful career, even in an affluent, "art-minded" society. To what extent his isolationist tendencies have affected his sculpture cannot be known. That he has produced moving work, and will continue to do so, cannot be doubted.

The historical import of Lekakis' work is best understood when it is seen within the context of abstract-expressionism. His critics, except for Mr. Rosenberg, have not discerned this. He has been regarded by some as highly personal and independent, and by others as an overly derivative disciple of Brancusi or Arp.[2] Lekakis himself looks at these resemblances to the European masters as coincidental and dislikes the implication of "borrowings."

The more accurate view would seem to be that the work does bear some relationship to the monolithic abstraction of Arp and Brancusi. It stands in the same relationship to those sculptors as does the work of Gorky and Pollock to that of Picasso. Late European Cubism of the '20's and '30's underwent a curious transformation in the hands of these and other American painters of the early '40's. It was loosened, even fragmented, biomorphicized, nevertheless never quite eliminated. Similarly, Lekakis' sculpture in the early '50's begins to turn the purities of Arp and Brancusi into something more involuted, complex and impassioned, while still retaining vestiges of a Cubist infrastructure.

In the "lines," which begin somewhat later in the '50's, the spatial openness of abstract-expressionism finds its parallel, as does something of the free gesturalism of the painters. Lekakis' columns do not present analogies to the action painting aspect of abstract-expressionism. But it is possible that they do to the more quietist work of such painters as Still, Newman and Rothko.

It is easy to find other parallels between Lekakis' spheroids and the work of the early abstract-expressionists. Surrealist-tinged reminiscences of organic form hint at processes of growth, becoming and metamorphosis, favorite themes of painters in the '40's. Similarly, among the painters, as in Lekakis' work, there is a frequently strong psychological affinity to primitive art.

Like Pollock and many other major American artists of the '40's, Lekakis never had a rigorous training in the formal language of Cubism. His relationship to it was that of a provincial who could not ignore it but assimilated it second-hand. But even while under its influence, American artists were ready to throw it off, to transform it. For the painters the liberation came in the '40's. For Lekakis, a parallel evolution, emanating from a deeply felt internal necessity rather than from direct influence, came in the early '50's.

Nevertheless, a certain conservatism distinguishes Lekakis' work from his contemporaries in the avant-garde. He has rejected constructing and welding,

preferring the slower search of the chisel and the formal continuities of the monolith. His spheroids retain the enclosing contour of the monolith, although he invades their masses with voids and occasionally attenuates them daringly. (In the lines he all but destroys the monolith, and forces his material into an openness which verges on that of constructivism). The pedestal is still essential to him, as a formal element and as a symbol of the transcendence of art.

The aesthetic relevance of Lekakis' work is closely tied in with what we now see as a brilliant chapter in 20th century art, a period when painters and sculptors, building on tradition, opened new doors for art. That the chapter is not closed is clearly shown by the continuing vitality and personal inventiveness of a sculptor such as Lekakis.

Priscilla Colt

1. *The New Yorker*, June 15, 1963, p. 84

2. Alfonso Ossorio in *Americans 1963*, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, p. 52

   S.T. in *Arts Magazine*, vol. 36, no. 3, Dec., 1961, p. 51

catalogue
photographs by emmet gowin

With one exception noted, works are lent by the artist. Measurements, unless otherwise noted, indicate height. Types of wood refer to the sculpture, not to the bases.

A group of drawings, not catalogued and not illustrated, are included in the exhibition.

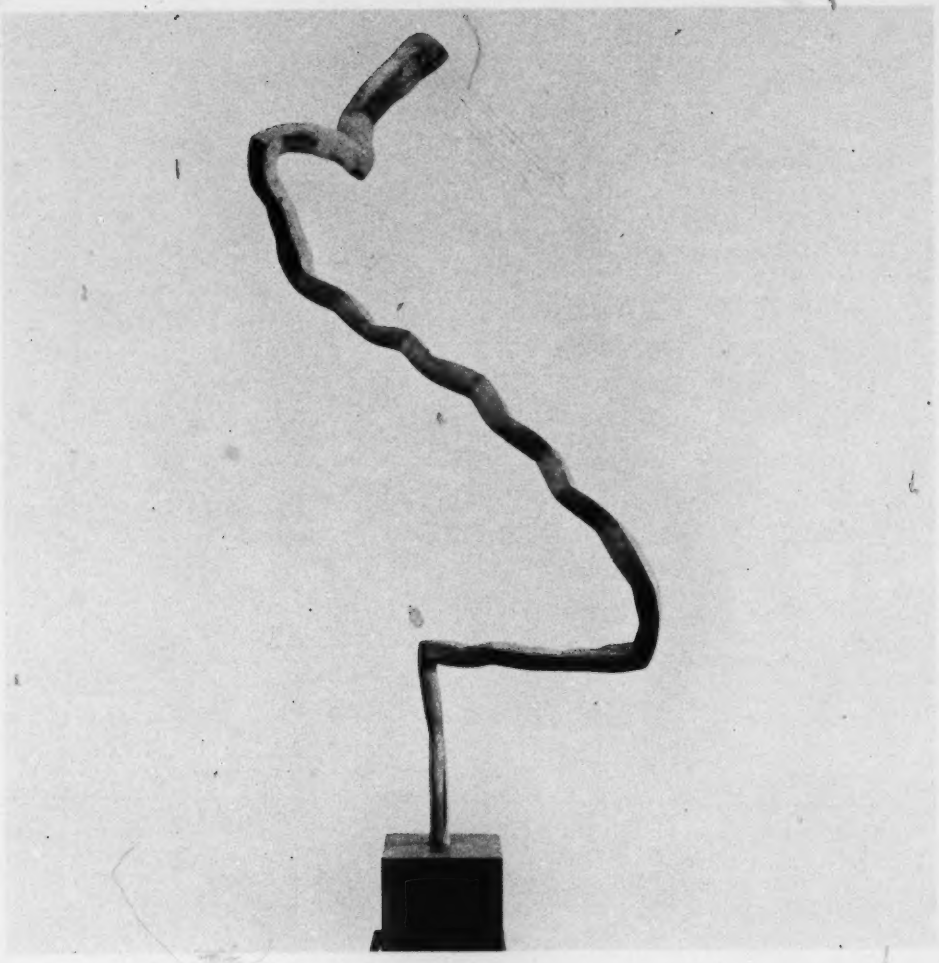
Grateful acknowledgement is made to the artist for his patient cooperation in the preparation of the exhibition, and to Mr. Sanford Friedman, New York, for his generosity in lending Eros-Psyche A, catalog no. 28.

grammoids

1 keraia a (formerly called python), cherry h. 37½", w. 62, with base, 64½"

2 keraia b, oak 84" with base, 93"

3 keraia e, oak h. 16" w. 31" with base, 42½"



4 keraia c, oak 56" with base, 64½"

5 keraia d, oak 57¾" with base, 82½" (not illustrated)

6 polyzygon, mulberry 34" with base, 59"

7 lysis, wisteria 33"

steloids

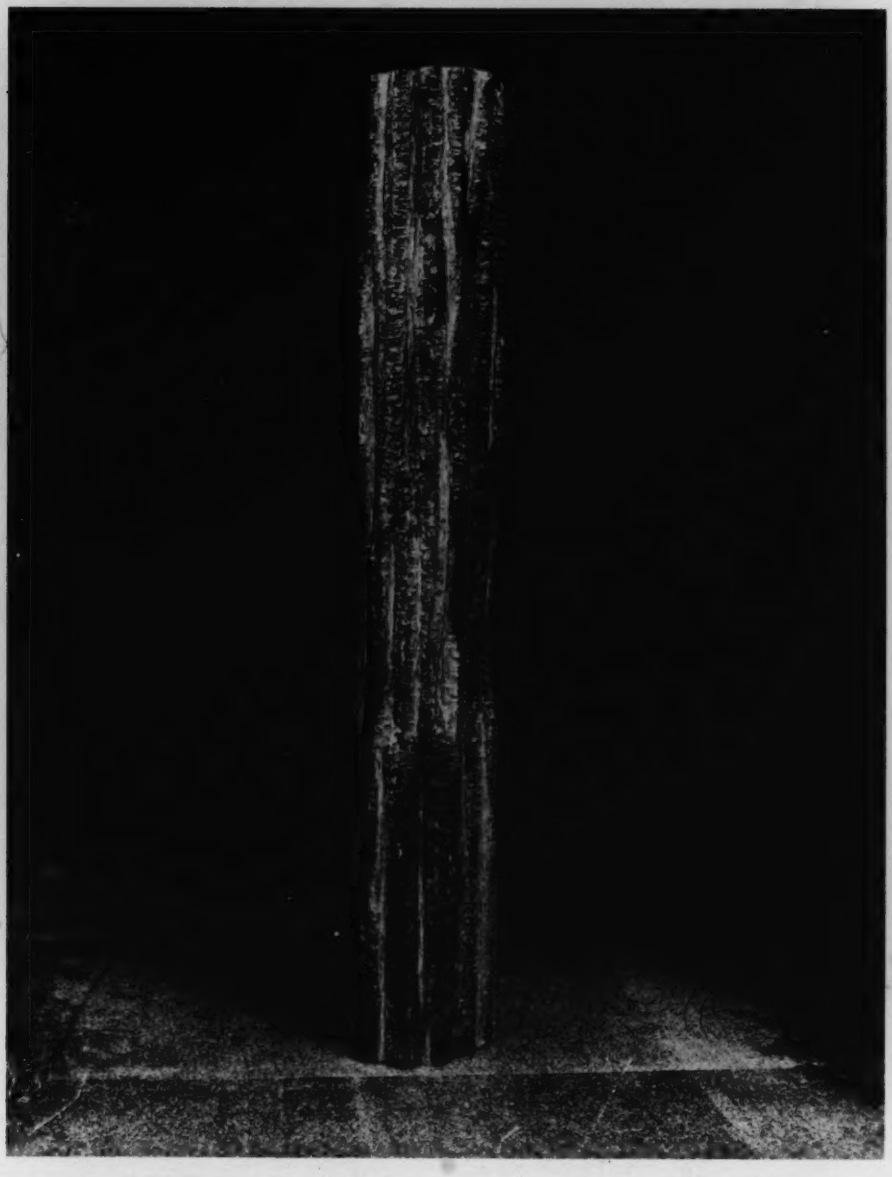
8 ypsiston, oak 29" with base, 64½"

9 dyonision, elm 25½" with base, 47"

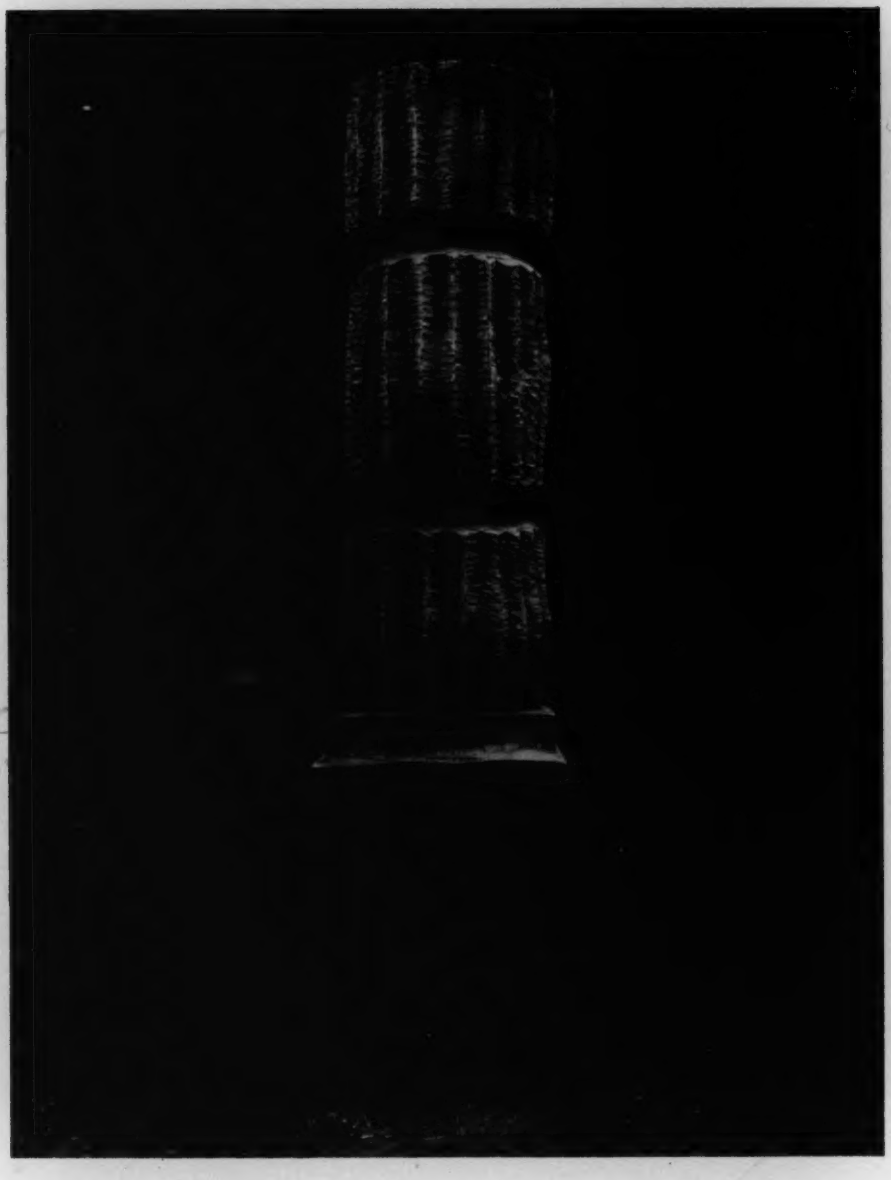
10 trocheion (formerly caled ikesia), rosewood 32" with base, 66"

11 tropaion b, cedar 77" with base, 88"

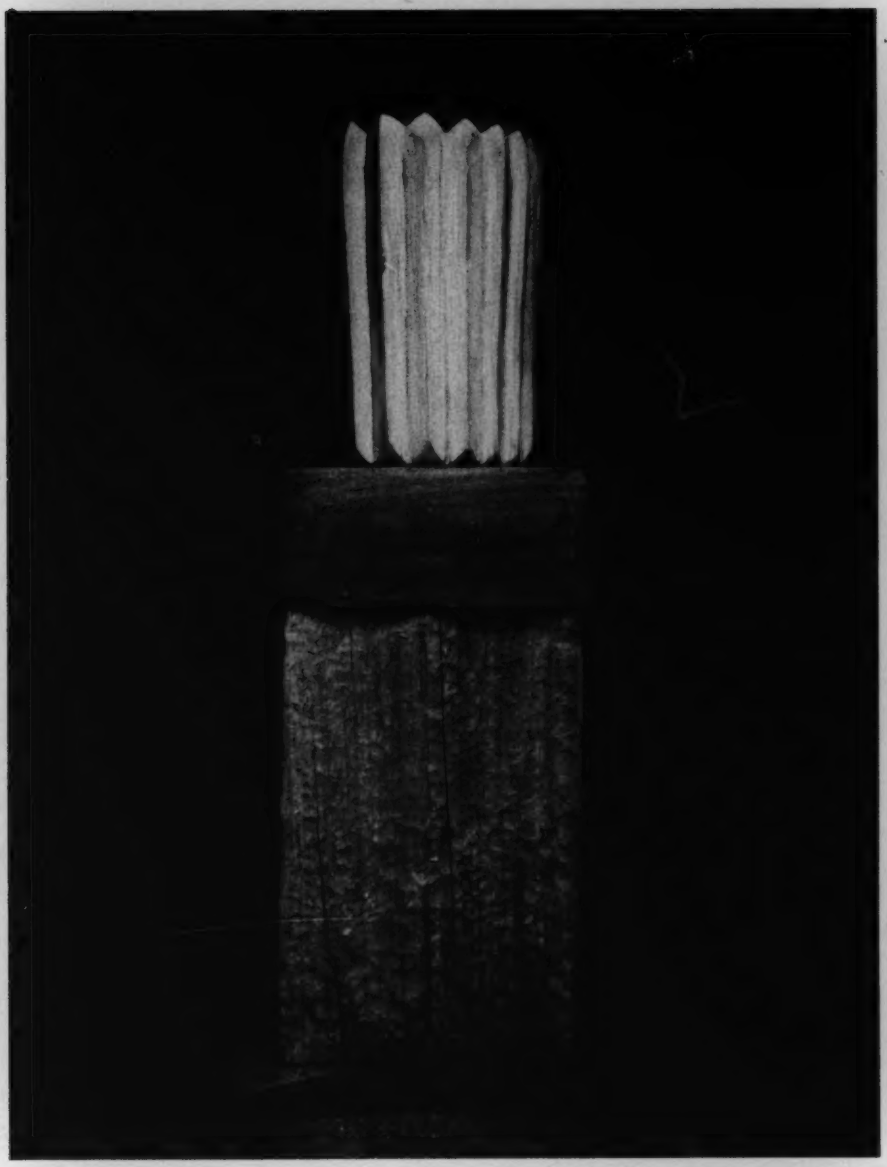
12 dekadonon (formerly called palmos I), cherry 49½" with base, 90½"



13 tropaion a, ebony 53"



14 spondilos, rosewood 38½" with base, 60½"



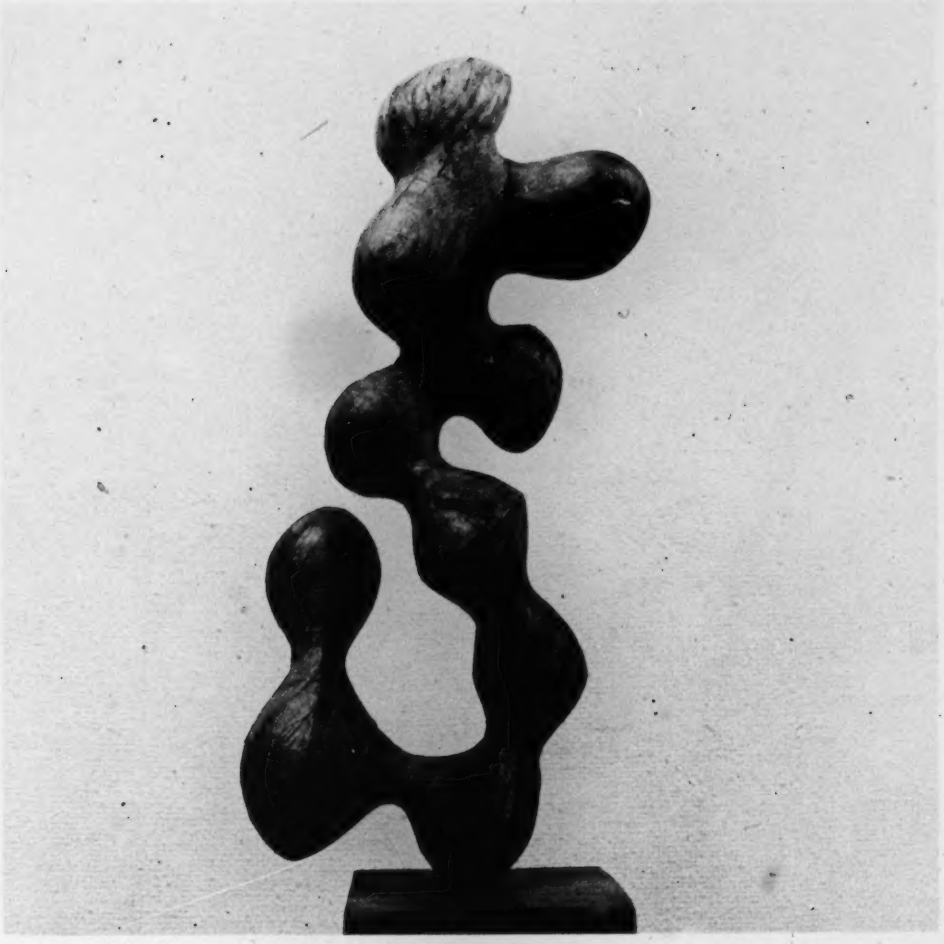
15 hemikyklios, oak 21¾" with base, 59"

16 stele, red pine 18" with base 51¾" (not illustrated)

17 strobilos, black pine 84"

18 aiora, black pine 69"

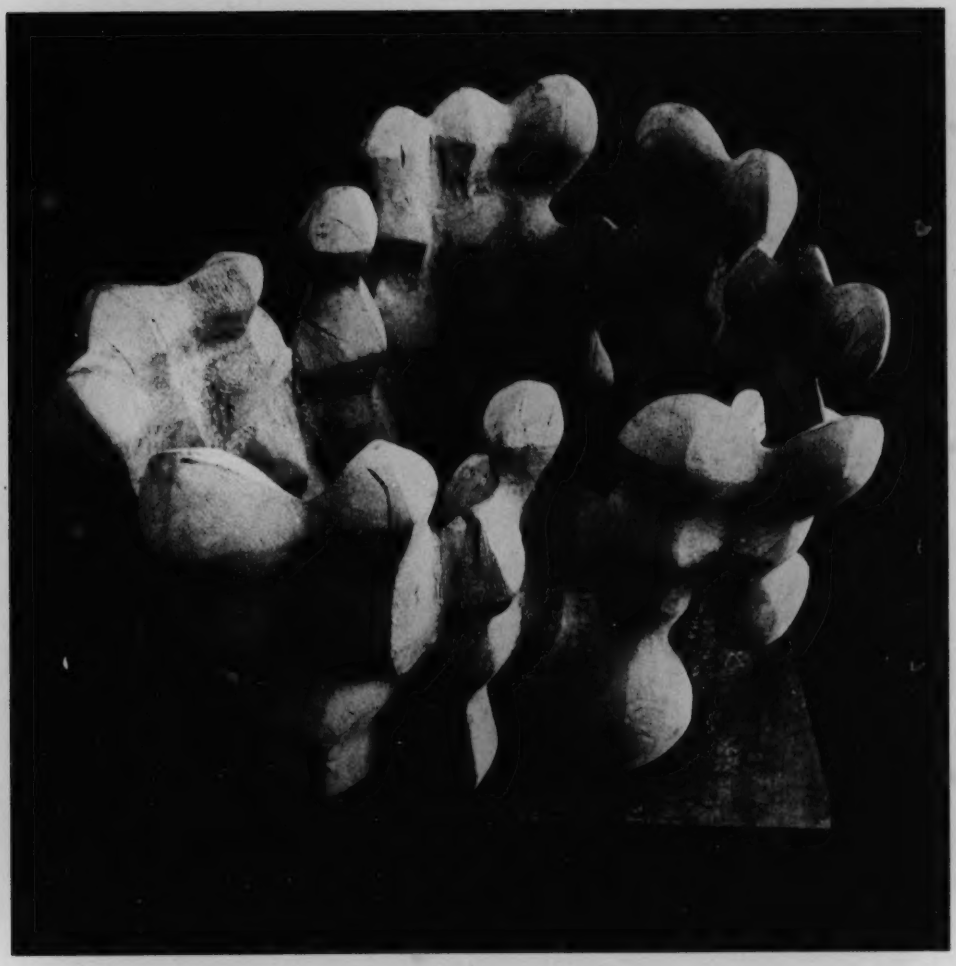
spheroids



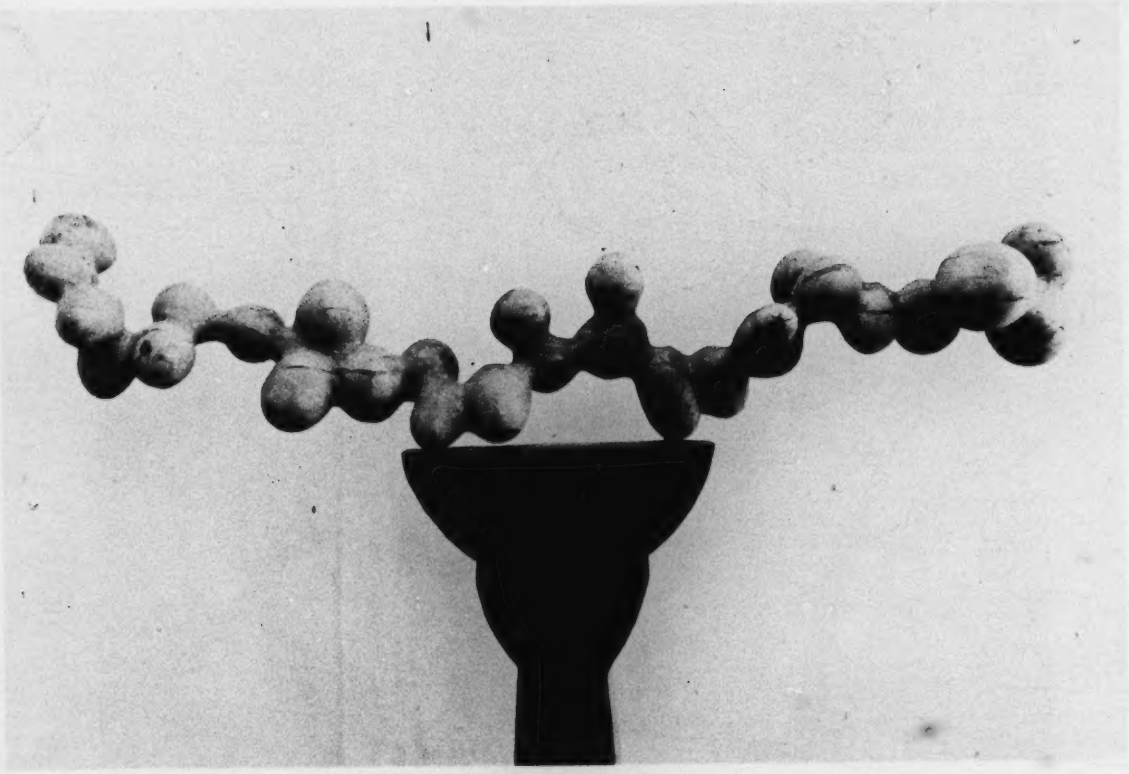
19 gorgon, cherry 18½" with base, 63½"

20 bacchidai, elm 18" with base, 50"

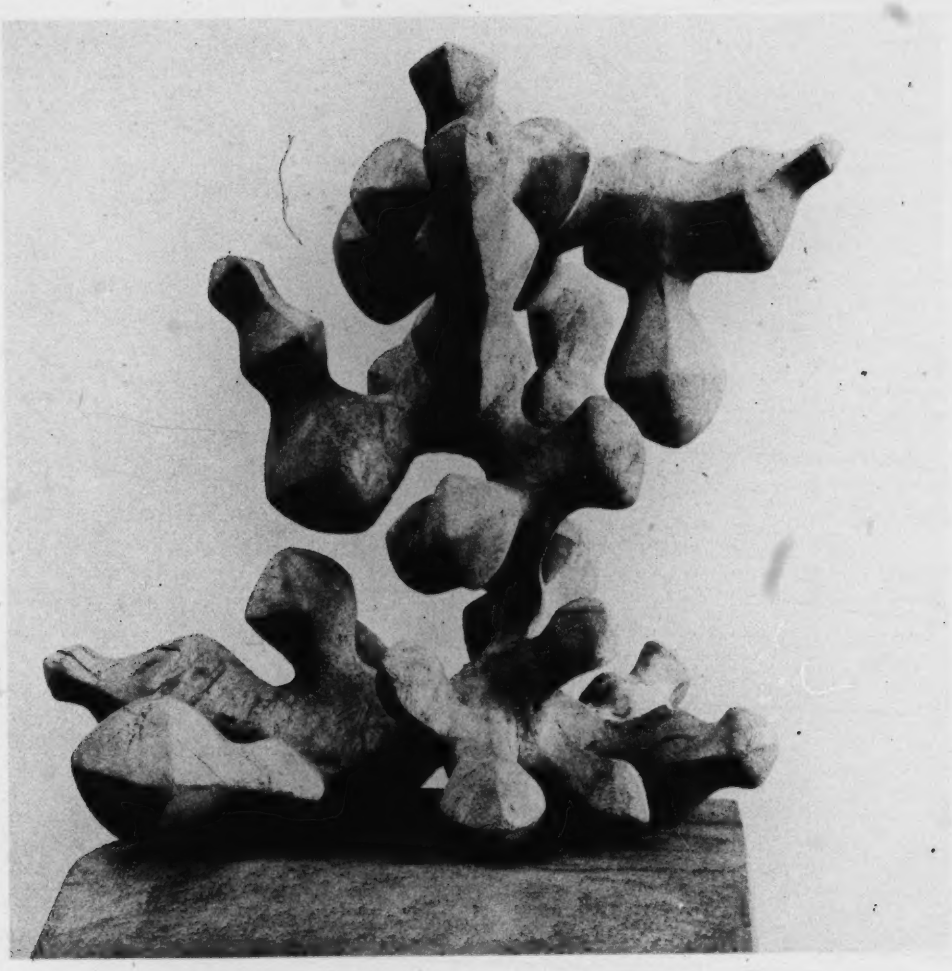
21 themelon, elm 15¾" with base, 28½"



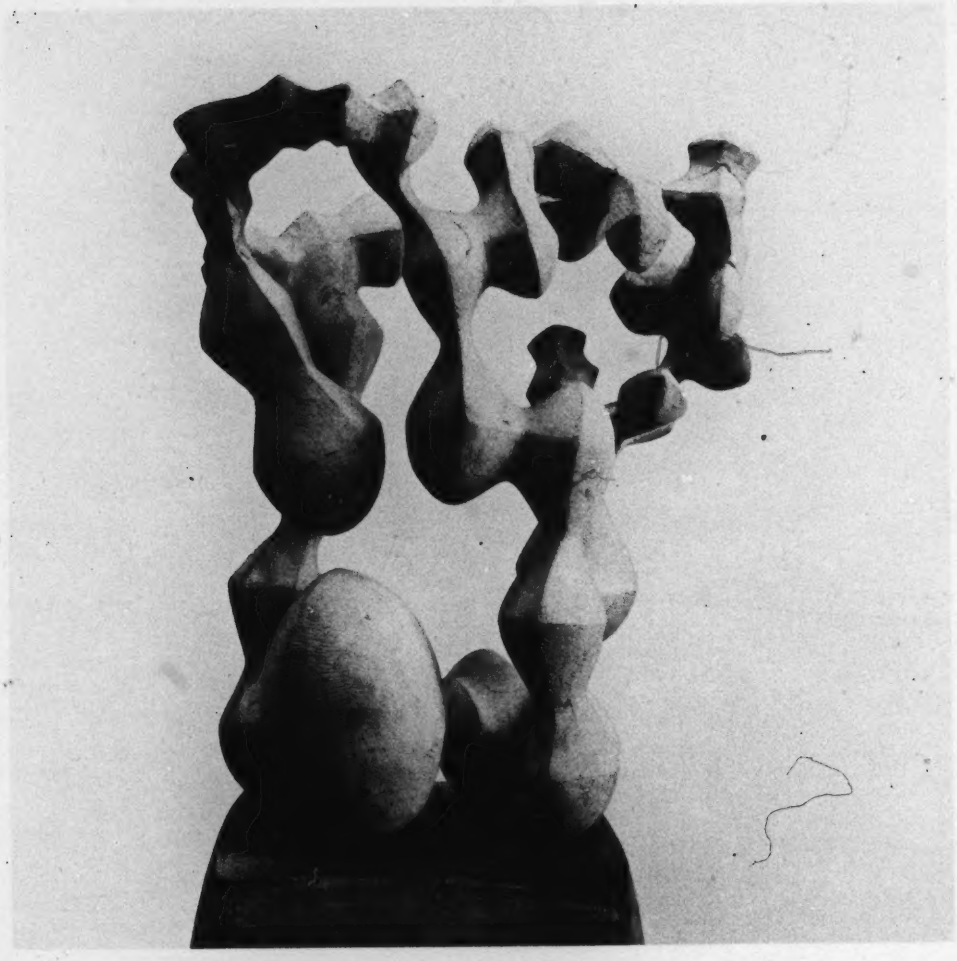
22 syrton, maple 20½" with base, 55¾"



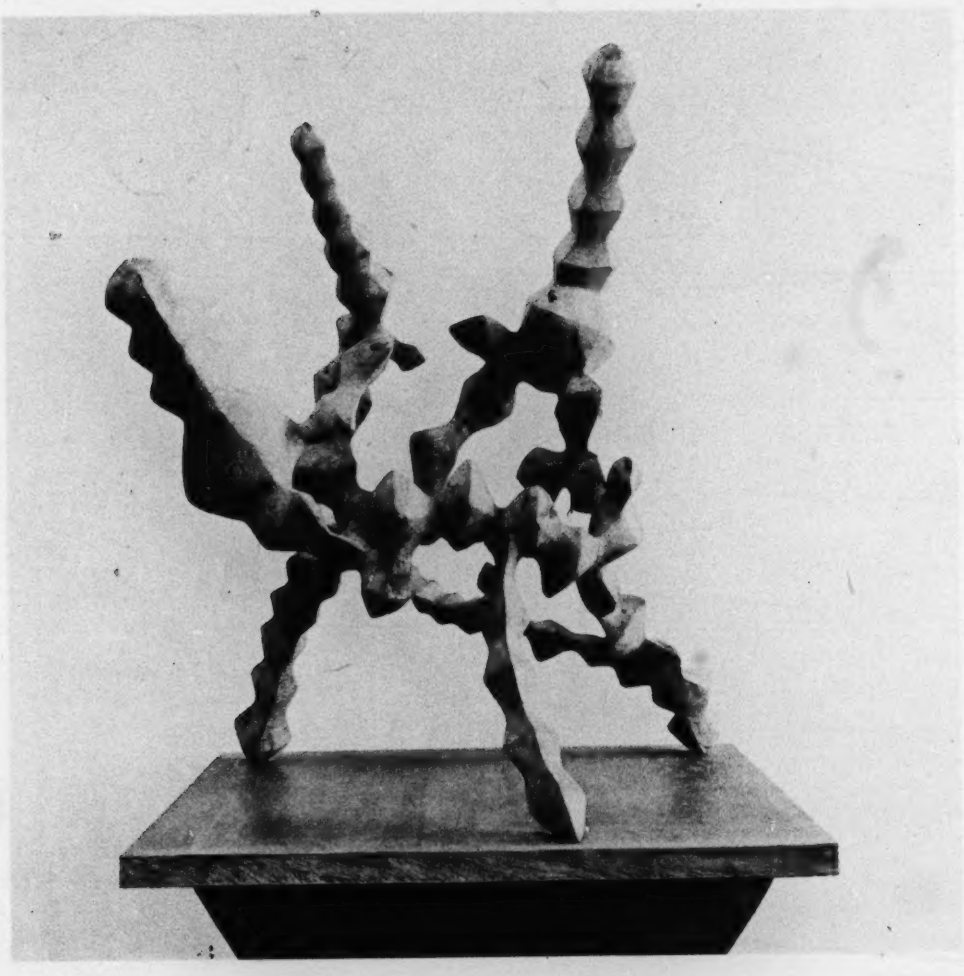
23 galaxias, oak 17½" w. 74" with base, 62½"



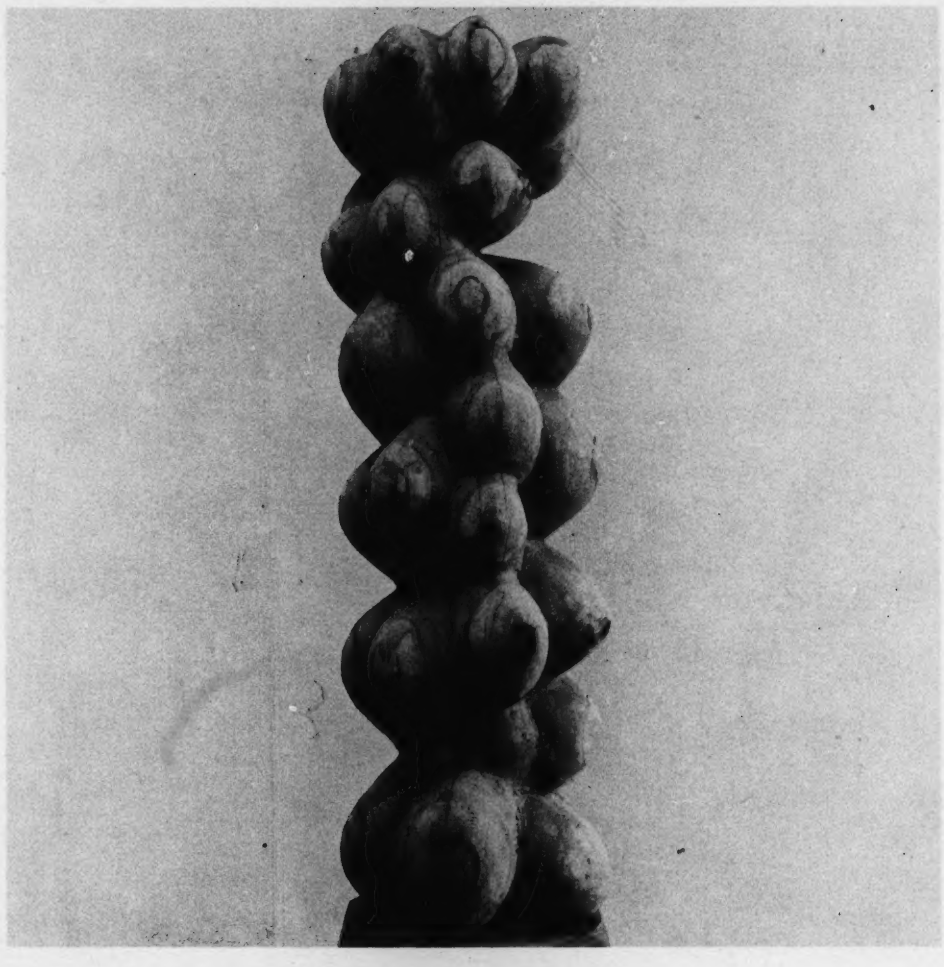
24 apotheosis, elm 22½" with base, 45½"



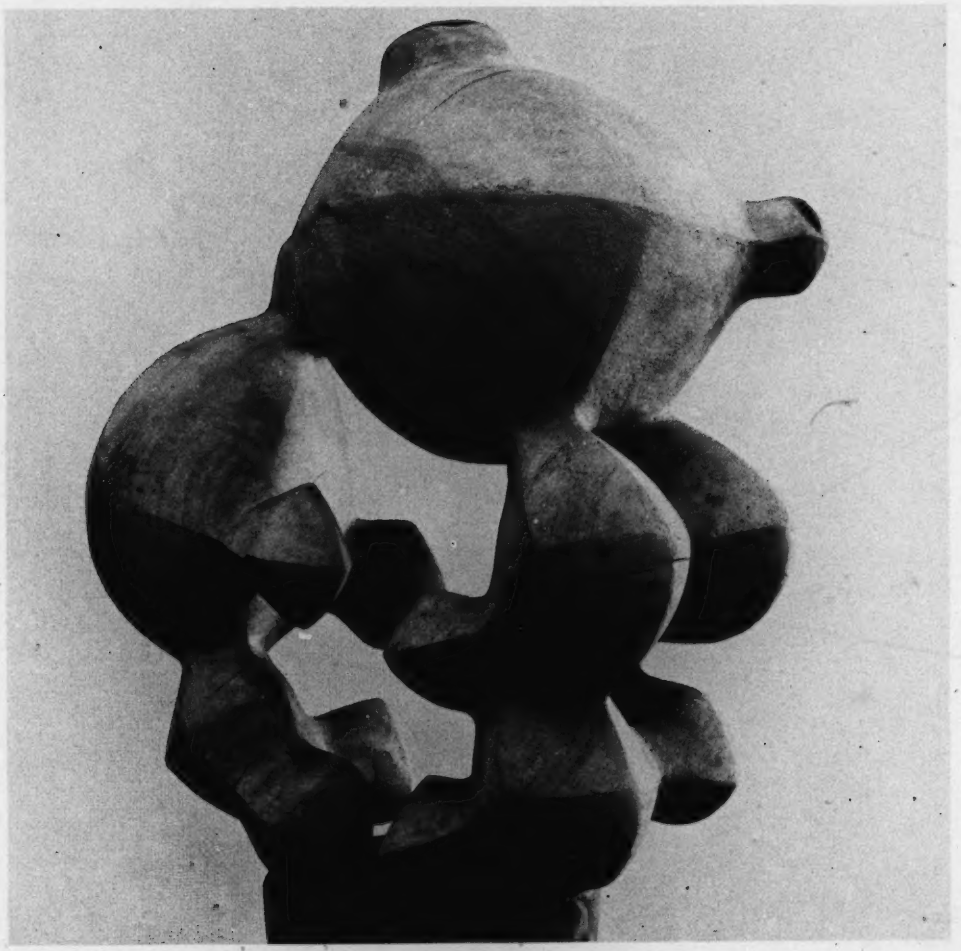
25 daimonion, maple 26¾" with base, 63½"



26 trimanton, oak 33½" with base, 66"



27 polymaston, oak 40½" with base, 67"



28 eros-psyche a, white pine 27" with base, 76" lent by sanford friedman, new york

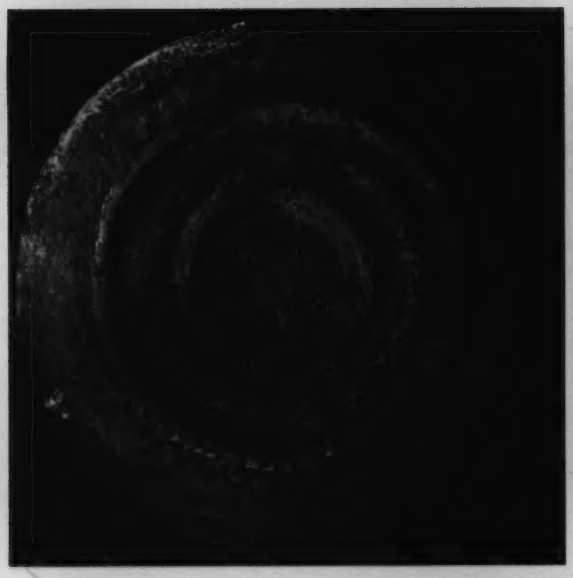
29 eros-psyche b, elm 30½" with base, 80½"

30 scarabeus, oak w. 9"

31 kybikon b, mahogany 15"

33 oedipus, brass 12"

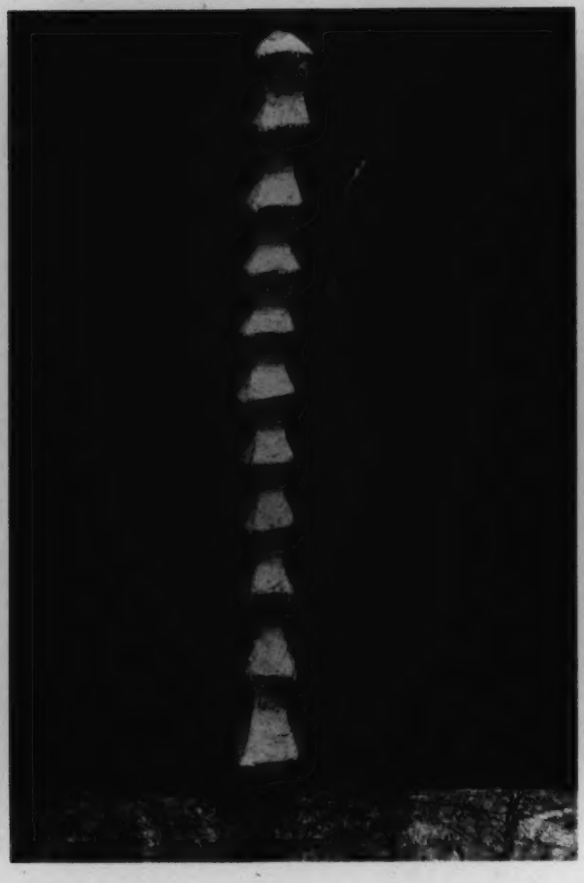
32 kybikon a, mahogany 11¼" (not illustrated)



34 diskos b, copper 17¼"

35 tholos, aluminum 14¾"

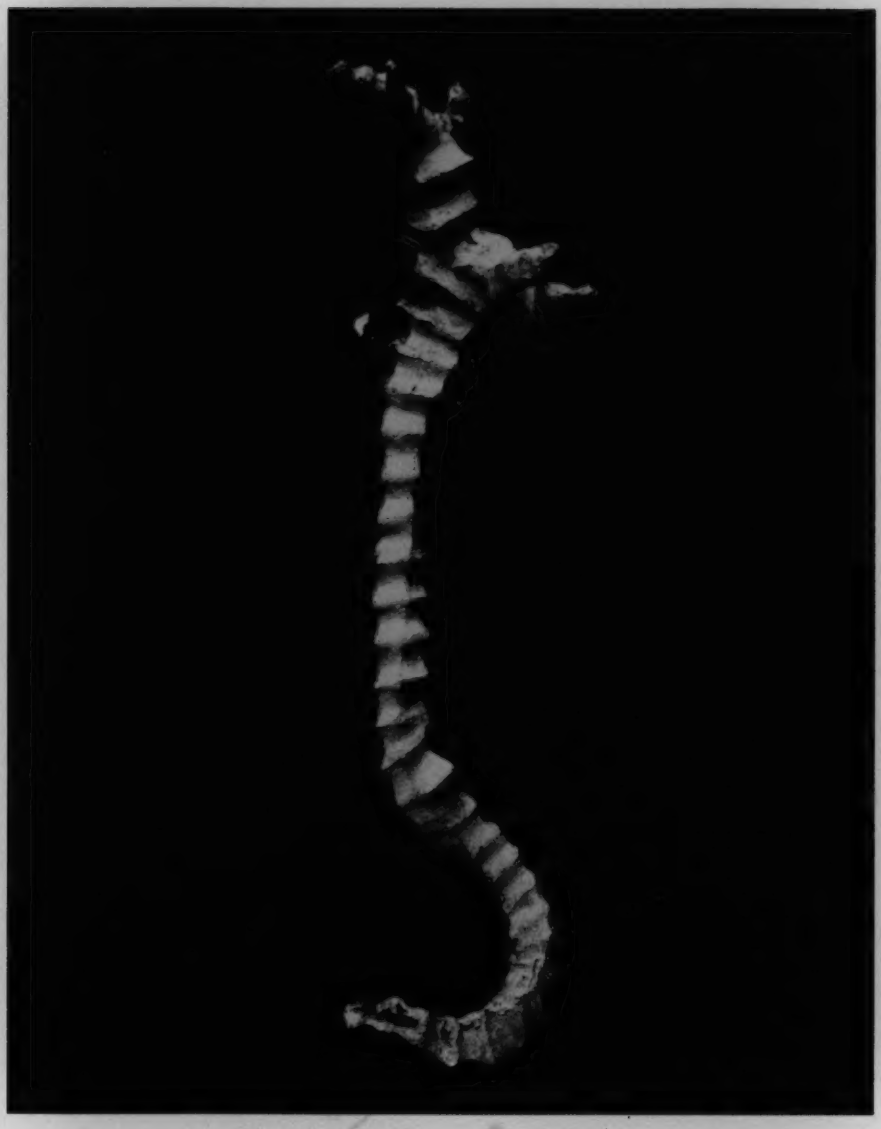
36 sirina, aluminum h. 16½" w. 15"



37 systron, oak 18½"

38 pyrgos, ivory 5¾" with base 7½"

39 sphigmos, cherry, w. 7¼" (not illustrated)



40 hippocambos, skinto 14½"

41 diskos a, copper 9½" (illustrated on cover)

HOURS

Art Museum: Open from 12:30 P.M. to 5 P.M. Tuesday through Friday, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Saturday, from 1 to 6 P.M. on Sunday and from 7:30 to 10 P.M. on Tuesday evenings (in season). Closed Mondays and holidays.

Circulating Gallery: Open from 12:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday and 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. on Tuesday evenings (in season).

Art Reference Library: Open as a reading room from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday, 9 A.M. to 12 noon on Saturday and 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. Tuesday Evenings (in season).

STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL

Thomas C. Colt, Jr.	Director
Mildred Raffel	Business Manager
Helen L. Pinkney	Librarian
Mary Lou Balsam	Information Assistant
Kathryn F. Pinkney	Musical Programs
Betty P. Clark	Membership Secretary
Angela Flook	Bookkeeper
Nyra Minnick	Assistant Bookkeeper
Read Viemeister	Designer
Evelyn Higgins	Library Assistant
Mariann Yatsco	Receptionist
Florence Phillips	Receptionist
Katherine Ridenour	Receptionist
James Fleming	Receptionist
Marcus Schultz	Art Supply Store
Sid Claunch	Art Supply Store
Charles Somers	Art Supply Store
Gerald L. Boehner	Superintendent
Andrew G. Boehner	Greenhouse
James Gates	Maintenance
Bennie Hopson	Maintenance
Wayne C. Lynn	Maintenance
Willie Price	Maintenance
Lawrence E. Webb	Maintenance
Gary Wilder	Maintenance
Ronnie C. Rice	Technician
William M. Wright	Technician
Pinkerton's, Inc.	Guards

ART MUSEUM

Bruce H. Evans	Curator
Mark A. Clark	Registrar; Associate Curator of Decorative Arts
Donald M. Glover	Curator of Museum Education
Helen L. Pinkney	Associate Curator of Textiles
Priscilla Colt	Consultant on Contemporary Art
Sarah C. Pierce	Museum Assistant

ART SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

John R. Duncan	Dean
Judy Cooper	Registrar
Ann Deeter	Secretary, Alumni Records Office
Genevieve Banks	Clerk-typist

INSTRUCTORS

Robert Antonick
William T. Bierly, Jr.
Charles S. Cave
Priscilla Colt
Horst P. Daniel
John F. Emery
Margaret M. Falke
Fred Farr
Delbert I. Footer
Harry J. Giambrone
Emmet Gowin
William Grams
John M. King
Robert C. Koepnick
Elaine Mandell
Ralph Neiman
David L. Peirick
Alvin Raffel
Kimber W. Smith
Helen G. Stamas
Walter E. Stomps, Jr.
Carlie Tart

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President	Mr. Harry S. Price, Jr.
Vice President	Mr. William P. Huffman
Secretary	Mr. R. L. DeMarse
Treasurer	Mr. H. W. Gillaugh

Mr. William J. Ahfeld
Mr. S. C. Allyn
Mr. W. P. Balthrop
Mr. Irvin G. Bieser
Mr. Vincent P. Blair
Mr. James M. Cox, Jr.
Mr. R. L. DeMarse
Mr. A. L. Freedlander
Mrs. Alfred W. French, Jr.
Mr. H. W. Gillaugh
Mrs. William F. Gorog
Mrs. Anthony Haswell
Mr. Alan F. Holzman
Mr. William P. Huffman
Mr. Max Isaacson
Mr. Howard C. Kelly
Mrs. Eugene Kettering
Mr. Ralf Kircher
Mr. Richard Levin
Mr. Robert E. MacDonald
Mrs. Daniel J. Mahoney, Jr.
Mr. H. Talbott Mead
The Honorable Jefferson Patterson
Mr. Walter G. Pfeiffer
Mr. Louis F. Polk
Mr. Harry S. Price, Jr.
Mr. Arthur Sieferman
Mrs. George W. Shaw
Mr. George E. Sheer
Mr. William P. Sherman
Mr. Carlton W. Smith
Mr. John Sullivan, Jr.
Mr. E. W. Weston

EX-OFFICIO

The Mayor of the City of Dayton
The Dayton City Manager
The President, University of Dayton
The President, Wright State University
The President of the Associate Board

ASSOCIATE BOARD

President	Mr. William H. Hagenbuch
Vice-President	Mrs. Chester E. Finn
Secretary	Mrs. George B. Hubler
Treasurer	Mr. James R. Ahart

Mr. and Mrs. James R. Ahart
Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Bergen III
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Bolling, Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. William Cassel
Mr. and Mrs. Robert P. Cramer
Mr. and Mrs. David Dimling
Mr. and Mrs. Chester Finn
Dr. and Mrs. Harry Graubarth
Mr. and Mrs. John Haddick
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Hagenbuch
Mr. and Mrs. Edward F. Herrlinger
Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Hilton IV
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Hobart, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. George B. Hubler
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Johnston
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Matusoff
Mr. and Mrs. J. Ramsay McGregor
Mr. and Mrs. James Mulligan
Mr. and Mrs. David Peck
Mr. and Mrs. Gayle B. Price, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Prigozen
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Siebenthaler
Mr. and Mrs. Boris F. Sokol
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stein
Mr. and Mrs. George Stoycos
Mr. and Mrs. Norman Wissinger
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Womsley

MEMBERSHIP

The Dayton Art Institute is a non-profit educational foundation, incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio 1919,, which owns and governs the Art Museum and the Art School of the Institute for the public benefit.

Membership: No invitation is required to become a member of the Dayton Art Institute. Persons interested may obtain complete information by calling the Membership Secretary, 223-5277.

The Founders and Members have contributed the Institute's beautiful buildings and lands, the art collections, and the endowments which cover 30% of current costs. Membership fees, contributions, and school tuitions provide the balance which supports activities, services and growth.

FORM FOR GIFT OR BEQUEST

I hereby give (or bequeath) to the Board of Trustees of the Dayton Art Institute of Dayton, Ohio, a non-profit educational institution incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio on February 28, 1919:

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

to be applied and used for the purpose of the Institute.

Signature . . . . . .

(Gifts and bequests may be made of real and personal property and of works of art, and their values therefore are deductible under national and state rulings from income and estate tax computations, whichever may be applicable.)